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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/551,281	07/17/2006	Seiichiro Yamamoto	47233-5002	1577
55694	7590	10/02/2009	EXAMINER	
DRINKER BIDDLE & REATH (DC) 1500 K STREET, N.W. SUITE 1100 WASHINGTON, DC 20005-1209				COLEMAN, RYAN L
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		1792		
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
		10/02/2009		
		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/551,281	YAMAMOTO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	RYAN COLEMAN	1792	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-6 and 11-22 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) 1-6 and 11-22 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 3-6 and 11-14 are drawn to an apparatus for discharging solid material stored in a container. Claim 15 is drawn to "storage equipment for solid matter". Claims 16-22 are also drawn to "storage equipment for solid matter". However, claims 16-22, as written, variously depend on the apparatus specified in claims 3-6 and 11-14. For purposes of this restriction requirement, it was presumed that since claims 16-22 are drawn to "storage equipment for solid matter", applicant intended to have claims 16-22 depend (directly or indirectly) on claim 15. Therefore, in this restriction requirement, claims 16-22 are considered to depend (directly or indirectly) on claim 15.
2. Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.
3. This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.
4. In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1 and 2, drawn to a method of discharging solid material stored in a container.

Group II, claim(s) 3-6 and 11-14, drawn to an apparatus for discharging solid material stored in a container.

Group III, claim(s) 15-22, drawn to an apparatus for storing solid matter.

5. The inventions listed as Groups I, II, and III do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: the special technical feature that exists between the three groups is known in the prior art. The special technical feature that is common between claims 1, 3, and 15, which are the independent claims of the three groups, is the feature of discharging solid matter from a container by supplying a discharging liquid into the container to generate a spiral flow of liquid and solid matter and subsequently discharging said liquid and solid matter from a discharge port formed in a bottom of the container. This special technical feature is taught by U.S. Patent No. 5,715,544 to Huffman et al. (hereafter referred to as "Huffman"). Huffman teaches a toilet bowl and a method of discharging solid waste from the toilet bowl (Col. 1, 5-7 and 28-45; Col. 2, 10-48; Col. 3, 42-57; Figures 1-3). Huffman teaches supplying water (reads on *discharging liquid*) into the toilet bowl to generate a spiral flow of liquid and waste and then subsequently discharging said spirally-flowing liquid and waste from a discharge outlet (item 18 in Figure 1; reads on *discharge port*) that is formed in the bottom of the bowl (Col. 1, 28-45; Col. 2, 10-48; Col. 3, 42-57).

6. A telephone call was made to Ronald Grudziecki on September 28, 2009 to request an oral election to the above restriction requirement, but did not result in an election being made.

7. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the

requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

8. The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To preserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

9. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to RYAN COLEMAN whose telephone number is (571)270-7376. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9-5.

11. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Kornakov can be reached on (571)272-1303. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

12. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/RLC/
Ryan L. Coleman
Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1792
September 29, 2009
/Michael Kornakov/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1792